

REPORT ON
THE 2009 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY
FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 7, AND 8
FOR THE
ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 1
SURVEY PROCESS	Page 1
ANALYSIS OF DATA	Page 1
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS	Page 2
VEHICLE RELATED SAFETY	Page 2
· VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS	Page 3
· SUICIDE	Page 4
· TOBACCO USE	Page 5
· ALCOHOL USE	Page 6
· ILLEGAL DRUG USE	Page 7
· HIV/AIDS EDUCATION	Page 8
· SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	Page 9
· DIETARY BEHAVIOR	Page 10
· SELF IMAGE AND STRESS	Page 11
· PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	Page 12
APPENDIX	Page 13

INTRODUCTION

The Arlington Public Schools contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to carry out the tabulation and an overview analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which had been implemented with students in grades 6 though 8. This survey was based on one developed specifically for middle school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The survey contains 82 questions. Students responded to questions which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, illegal drug use, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior (grades 7 and 8 only), body weight, self-image, and physical activity.

SURVEY PROCESS

It was agreed that the survey would be administered to all students in attendance from grades 6, 7, and 8 on the agreed upon date. The survey was administered simultaneously to all students on May 27, 2009 by professional staff during the first period of the day. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and twenty-three students were exempted at parental request. Teachers were provided with written instructions, which were read to all students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of 925 students who responded to the survey, 332 from grade 6, 302 from grade 7, and 287 from grade 8. There were 465 females and 456 males who responded to the survey. Four students did not indicate their grade and four students did not indicate their gender.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Frequencies of responses are reported for all items in the survey and cross-tabulations are provided for three demographic characteristics: grade, gender, and grade/gender. The results of the survey, including all cross-tabulations, are presented in percentages under separate cover. Please note that the data results were tabulated in percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There is much important and relevant information to be found in an analysis of the tabulations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as taken by students from the Arlington Public Schools. This is true when one looks at the tabulations of all students taken as a group, and is especially so when one looks at the cross-tabulations by grade and gender.

With students having responded to 82 questions, much can be said about the responses to each of those questions. However, it is not the intention here to discuss the results of each question. Rather, it is the intention of this report to highlight certain of the results, to offer comparisons by grade and gender, as well as comparisons with the results of the Arlington YRBS which was completed in March of 2006. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist the Arlington Public Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.

It should be noted that some of the questions in the current survey were not asked in 2006 and the wording of other questions and/or responses has changed. As a result, in those cases comparisons to the results of 2006 and before cannot be drawn.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6, 7, 8

SAFETY

- **2.3%** of all respondents (3.4% - 2006) **report “not at all” or “hardly ever” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car** (grade 6 – 0.9%, grade 7 – 2.3%, and grade 8 – 3.8%). Males (3.3%) were more likely to report doing so than were females (1.3%).
- **Nearly one-fourth (24.2%)** of all respondents (27.2% - 2006) **report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.** Respondents from grade 6 (16.8%) were less likely to never or rarely wear a bicycle helmet than those from grade 7 (25.5%) or grade 8 (31.4%). Males (29.2%) were more likely to not wear a bicycle helmet than were females (19.3%).
- **16.6%** of all respondents (23.0% - 2006) **report having ever ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking two drinks or more of alcohol.** The incidence of this experience was lowest in grade 6 (grade 6 – 9.1%, grade 7 – 18.9%, grade 8 – 20.3%). There was no variation by gender.
- **One in ten (10.8%)** **reports having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others while on the internet during the previous twelve months.** The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 7 (grade 6 – 10.1%, grade 7 – 13.3%, and grade 8 – 8.8%). There was little variation by gender (females – 11.7%, males – 9.8%).

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **2.7%** of all respondents (6.0% - 2006) **report having ever carried a gun (other than supervised shooting or hunting)** (grade 6 – 1.8%, grade 7 – 3.3%, grade 8 – 3.1%). One respondent (0.2%) (a male) reports having done so at school during the school day.
- **19.5%** of all respondents (25.5% - 2006) **report having ever carried any other type of weapon such as a knife or club, and 2.6% (6.0% - 2006) report having done so to school during the school day.** Males, especially those in grade 8, report having done so more frequently than females.

“Have you ever carried any other type of weapon such as a knife or club to school during the school day?”

“Yes”

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
6	0%	1.1%	0.6%
7	1.9%	3.5%	2.6%
8	2.7%	7.2%	4.9%
Total	1.5%	3.7%	2.6%
2006	0.8%	11.8%	6.0%

- **40.2%** of all respondents (41.3% - 2006) **report having had their property stolen or deliberately damaged on school property during school time on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey.** The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 7 (grade 6 – 39.8%, grade 7 – 45.4%, grade 8 – 35.2%). There was no variation by gender.
- **11.1%** of all respondents **report having been bullied or harassed on their way to or from school during the previous thirty days.** Further, **19.6%** of all respondents **report having had this experience while they were in school.** The experience of being bullied or harassed during the school day in the previous thirty days was higher among respondents from grade 7 (25.8%) than among those from grade 6 (16.4%) or grade 8 (16.7%). There was little variation by gender (females – 18.6%, males – 20.6%).
- **One respondent in twelve (8.5%) (11.2% - 2006) reports having ever hurt themselves on purpose.** There was no variation by grade and little variation by gender (females – 9.7%, males – 7.3%).

SUICIDE

- **9.3%** of all respondents (10.3% - 2006) **report having ever seriously thought about committing suicide** and **3.5%** (2.2% - 2006) **report having ever made a plan to do so**. The incidence of students reporting having seriously considered suicide was slightly higher among respondents from grade 6 (10.9%) than among those from grade 7 (8.4%) or grade 8 (8.4%). Female respondents (12.3%) report having done so twice as frequently as males (6.2%).
- **2.5%** of all respondents (1.3% - 2006) **report having ever tried to commit suicide**. There was very little variation by grade.

“Have you ever tried to kill yourself?”

“Yes”

Grade	Female	Male	Total
6	3.2%	1.7%	2.4%
7	3.2%	2.8%	3.0%
8	4.1%	0%	2.1%
Total	3.5%	1.5%	2.5%
2006	1.6%	0.9%	1.3%

TOBACCO USE

- **3.4%** of all respondents (11.2% - 2006) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking** (even just a puff) and **1.9%** of all respondents (3.9% - 2006) **report having smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before the age of 12.** The incidence of those having ever tried cigarette smoking was highest in grade 8 (grade 6 – 1.8%, grade 7 – 3.0%, grade 8 – 5.6%). Males (4.9%) were more likely to have ever done so than were females (1.9%).
- **1.5%** of all respondents (3.4% - 2006) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.** There was very little variation by gender.
- **98.4%** of all respondents **report that their parents would feel it would be wrong or very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes.** There was no variation by grade or gender in this perception.

ALCOHOL USE

- **71.0%** of all respondents (71.6% - 2006) **report having never had a drink of alcohol, other than a sip and/or other than for religious reasons** (grade 6 – 75.5%, grade 7 – 71.6%, grade 8 – 62.5%). Further, 17.7% of all respondents (16.4% - 2006) report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 12.
- **9.5%** of all respondents **report having had a drink of alcohol more than a few sips, at least once during the previous thirty days.** The incidence of recent alcohol use increased slightly each year by grade (grade 6 – 6.7%, grade 7 – 10.4%, grade 8 – 11.9%). Males (11.5%) report doing so more frequently than females (7.6%).
- **3.8%** of all respondents (7.8% - 2006) **report having ever been drunk** (grade 6 – 0.6%, grade 7 – 5.3%, grade 8 – 6.0%) (females – 2.5%, males – 5.1%).
- **5.6%** of all respondents (8.2% - 2006) **report having attended a party held in a home in their town where alcohol use by teens is allowed, either occasionally or frequently** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was highest among respondents from grade 8 (grade 6 – 3.9%, grade 7 – 5.0%, grade 8 – 8.3%). There was no variation by gender.
- When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, 14% believed that over half of their peers had done so and another 29% (total 42%) believed that over one-quarter had done so. In fact, 10% of all respondents actually report having used alcohol during the previous month.

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **2.8%** of all respondents (2.2% - 2006) **report having ever used marijuana**. 8th grade respondents (5.2%) were more likely to have done so than were those from grade 6 (0.9%) or grade 7 (2.7%). There was very little variation by gender (females – 2.3%, males – 3.5%). Further, 0.4% of all respondents (1.3% - 2006) report having done so before the age of 12 and 1.5% report using marijuana during the previous month.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 14.5% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, 1.5% of all respondents actually report having used marijuana during the previous month.**
- **One respondent in ten (9.6%)** (14.0% - 2006) **reports having ever sniffed glue, gasoline, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high**. The incidence of the lifetime use of inhalants was higher among male respondents.

“Have you ever sniffed glue, gasoline, or breathed the contents of spray cans or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high?”

“Yes”		<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Grade</u>				
6		5.2%	14.5%	10.1%
7		6.3%	14.2%	10.0%
8		10.2%	7.2%	8.8%
Total		7.2%	12.2%	9.6%
2006		8.3%	20.4%	14.0%

- **13.1%** of all respondents (8.2% - 2006) **report that there is someone in their family whose drinking or drug use bothers them**.
- **6.2%** of all respondents (5.7% - 2006) **report having ever been sold or offered drugs on school property**. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 1.5%, grade 7 – 8.6%, grade 8 – 9.1%). There was little variation by gender (females – 5.0%, males – 7.5%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **87.9%** of all respondents (88.7% - 2006) **report having ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school** (grade 6 – 87.2%, grade 7 – 83.4%, grade 8 – 93.3%). There was little variation by gender.
- **51.0%** of all respondents (48.9% - 2006) **report that they have not ever spoken about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents/guardians or other adults in their family** (grade 6 – 54.9%, grade 7 – 46.0%, grade 8 – 51.7%) (females – 53.5%, males – 48.5%).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **5.1%** of all respondents (3.4% - 2006) **report having ever had sexual intercourse**. There was very little variation by grade (grade 7 – 4.7%, grade 8 – 5.6%). Males (6.8%) report ever doing so more frequently than females (3.6%).
- **6.5%** of all respondents **report having ever participated in oral sex either given or received** (grade 7 – 5.6%, grade 8 – 7.4%). The incidence of this behavior was higher among males (females – 4.9%, males – 8.2%).
- **6.3%** of all respondents (5.7% - 2006) **report that they have ever been involved in sexual intercourse or sexual touching against their will**. There was no variation by grade. Females (8.2%) report this experience more frequently than males (4.3%).
- **37.5%** of all respondents (44.1% - 2006) **report that they have never talked about sex with their parents/guardians or other adults in their family** (grade 7 – 38.4%, grade 8 – 36.6%). Male respondents (43.2%) report not having such conversations more frequently than females (32.4%).

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- **8.9%** of all respondents (9.9% - 2006) **report that they are concerned about their weight either “most of the time” or “always”** (grade 6 – 9.5%, grade 7 – 9.2%, grade 8 – 7.7%). Females (11.3%) report this concern more frequently than males (6.4%).
- **6.3%** of all respondents (8.6% - 2006) **report having ever vomited, starved themselves, taken laxatives, diet drinks, or pills to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight.** There was little variation by grade. Female respondents (8.7%) report having done so more frequently than males (3.8%).
- During the seven days prior to the survey:
 - **14.4%** of all respondents (12.1% - 2006) **report having had a drink of soda (not diet), flavored punch, sports drinks, sweetened iced-tea, or other fruit-flavored drinks at least once a day.**
 - **48.5%** of all respondents (58.6% - 2006) **report having eaten fresh fruit at least once a day.**
 - **29.7%** of all respondents (31.1% - 2006) **report having had a drink of 100% fruit juice at least once a day.**

SELF-IMAGE AND STRESS

- **3.1%** of all respondents (4.7% - 2006) **report that they fit in with people their own age either “not at all” or “hardly ever”**. There was very little variation by grade (grade 6 – 3.0%, grade 7 – 3.7%, grade 8 – 2.5%) and no variation by gender.
- **4.9%** of all respondents (8.6% - 2006) **report that they worry that they are not good at anything either “most of the time” or “always”**. Respondents from grade 6 report this perception least often (grade 6 – 3.3%, grade 7 – 5.7%, grade 8 – 5.6%) (females – 6.3%, males – 3.3%).
- **Nearly one respondent in five (19.2%)** (19.0% - 2006) **reports that they are under too much stress or pressure either “most of the time” or “always”**. This perception increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 15.3%, grade 7 – 19.2%, grade 8 – 23.6%) (females – 24.1%, males – 14.1%). Further, respondents **report that the source of the greatest amount of pressure in their lives is: myself (20.7%), parents/guardians (15.2%), and teachers (27.2%)**.

PYHICAL ACTIVITY

- **89.7%** of all respondents (87.6% - 2006) **report having exercised or moved their body quickly (outside of gym class) on at least three occasions during the seven days prior to the survey.** The incidence of such regular exercise was highest in grade 6 (grade 6 – 91.6%, grade 7 – 86.9%, grade 8 – 90.7%) (females – 87.6%, males – 92.0%).
- **55.7%** of all respondents (49.3% - 2006) **report that they do not think that there are enough games and activities offered through the school activities program to meet their needs and interest** (grade 6 – 63.8%, grade 7 – 51.3%, grade 8 – 51.1%). There was no variation by gender.
- **23.5%** of all respondents (28.8% - 2006) **report watching TV or videos, playing electronic games, and using the internet for fun at least three hours per day on an average school day.** Respondents from grade 6 (16.7%) report doing so less frequently than those from grade 7 (23.4%) or grade 8 (31.5%) (females – 20.4%, males – 26.6%).

APPENDIX

TO THE REPORT ON THE

2009 MIDDLE SCHOOL

YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

FOR THE

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

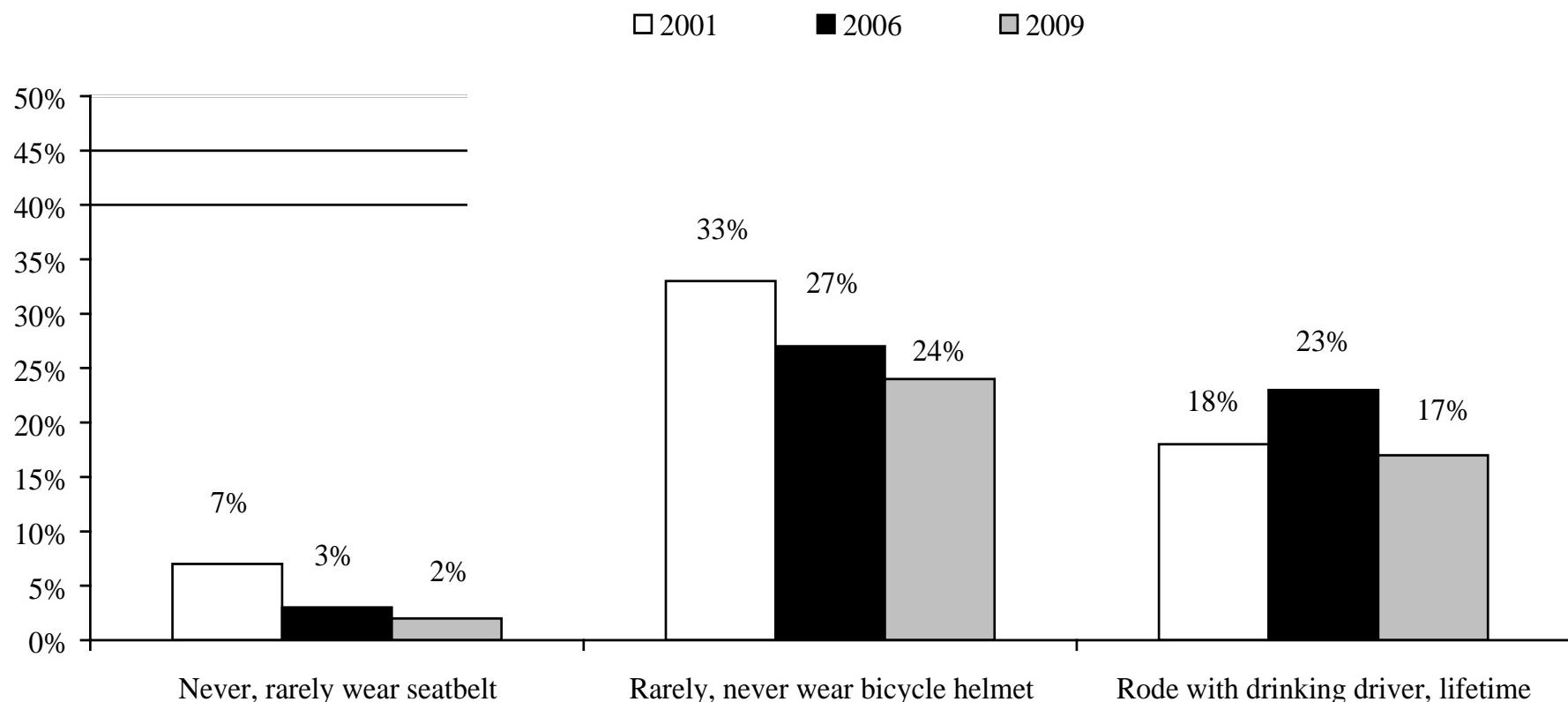
SELECTED COMPARISONS

2001, 2006 AND 2009

FOR GRADES 6, 7 AND 8

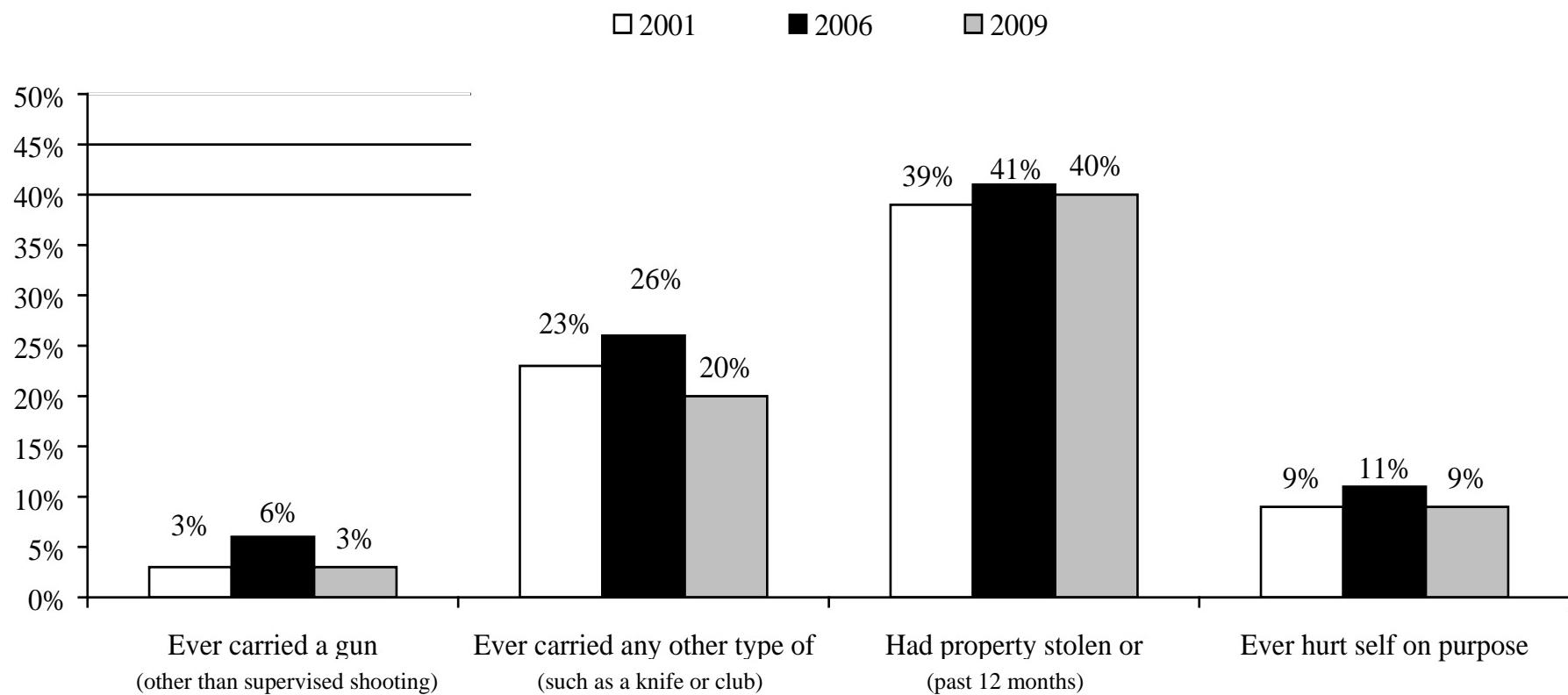
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

VEHICLE RELATED SAFETY



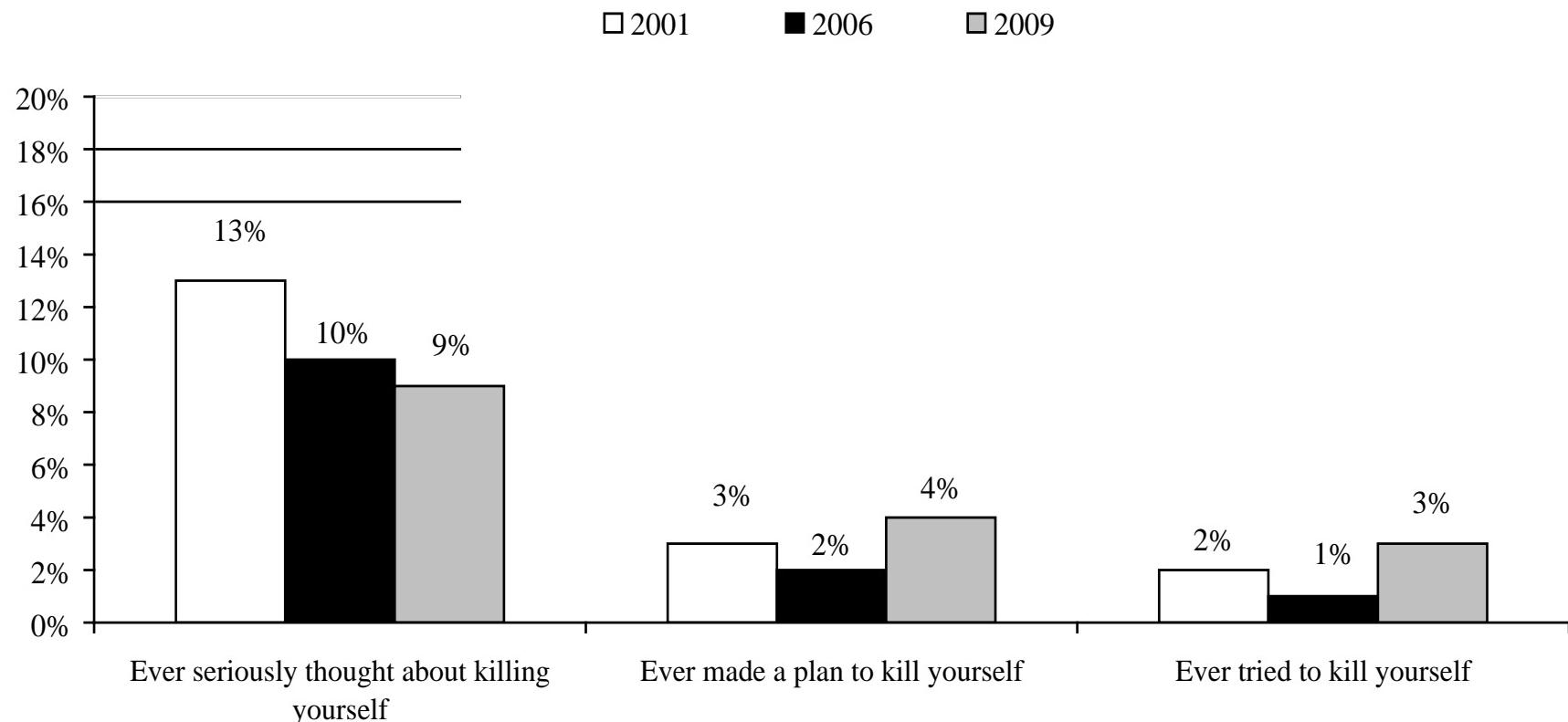
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

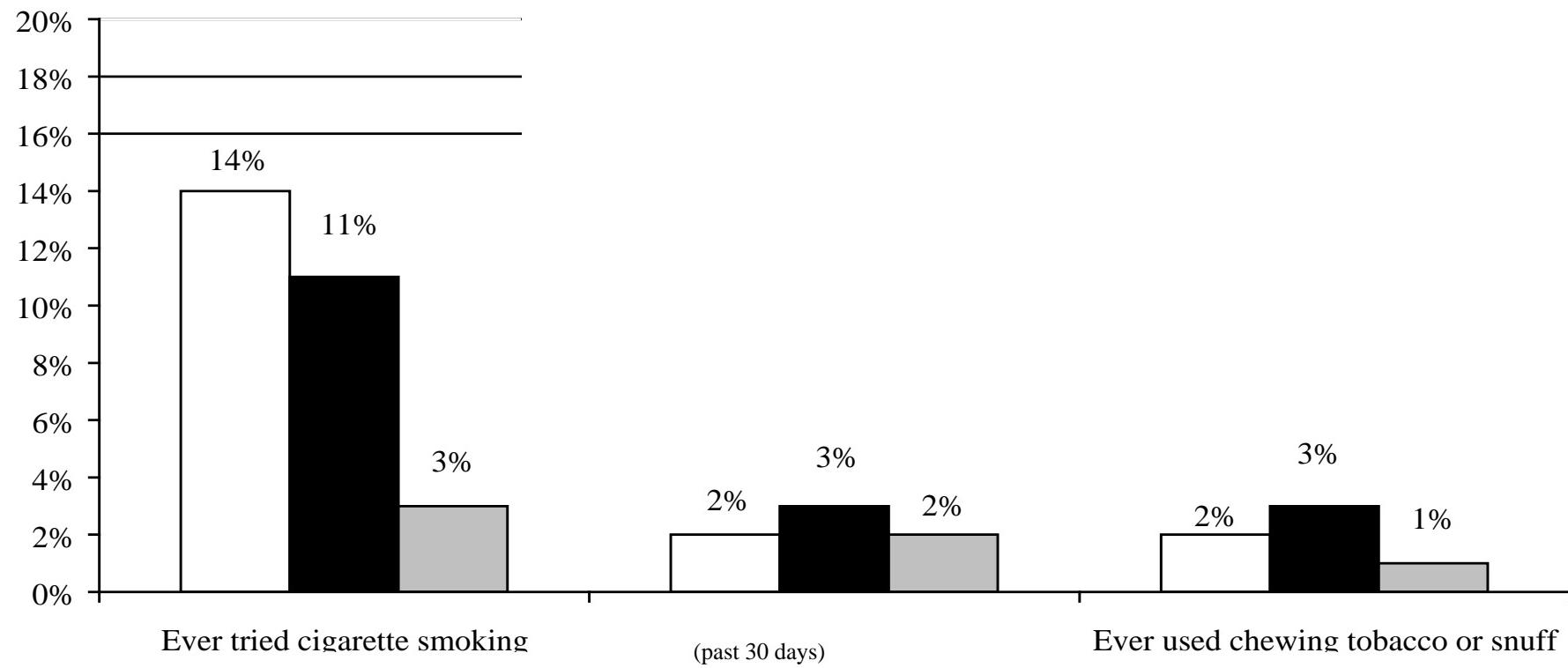
SUICIDE



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

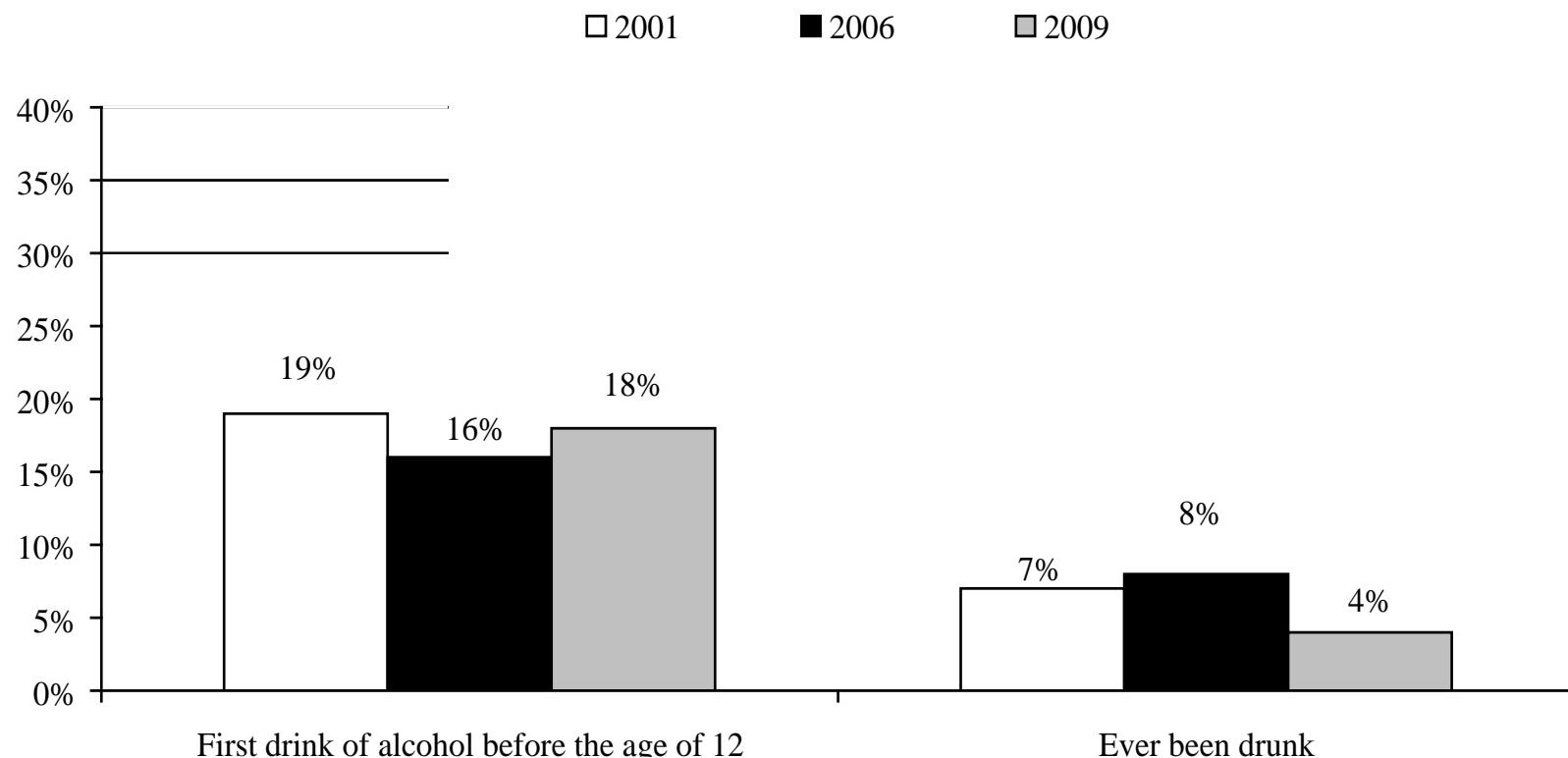
TOBACCO USE

□ 2001 ■ 2006 □ 2009



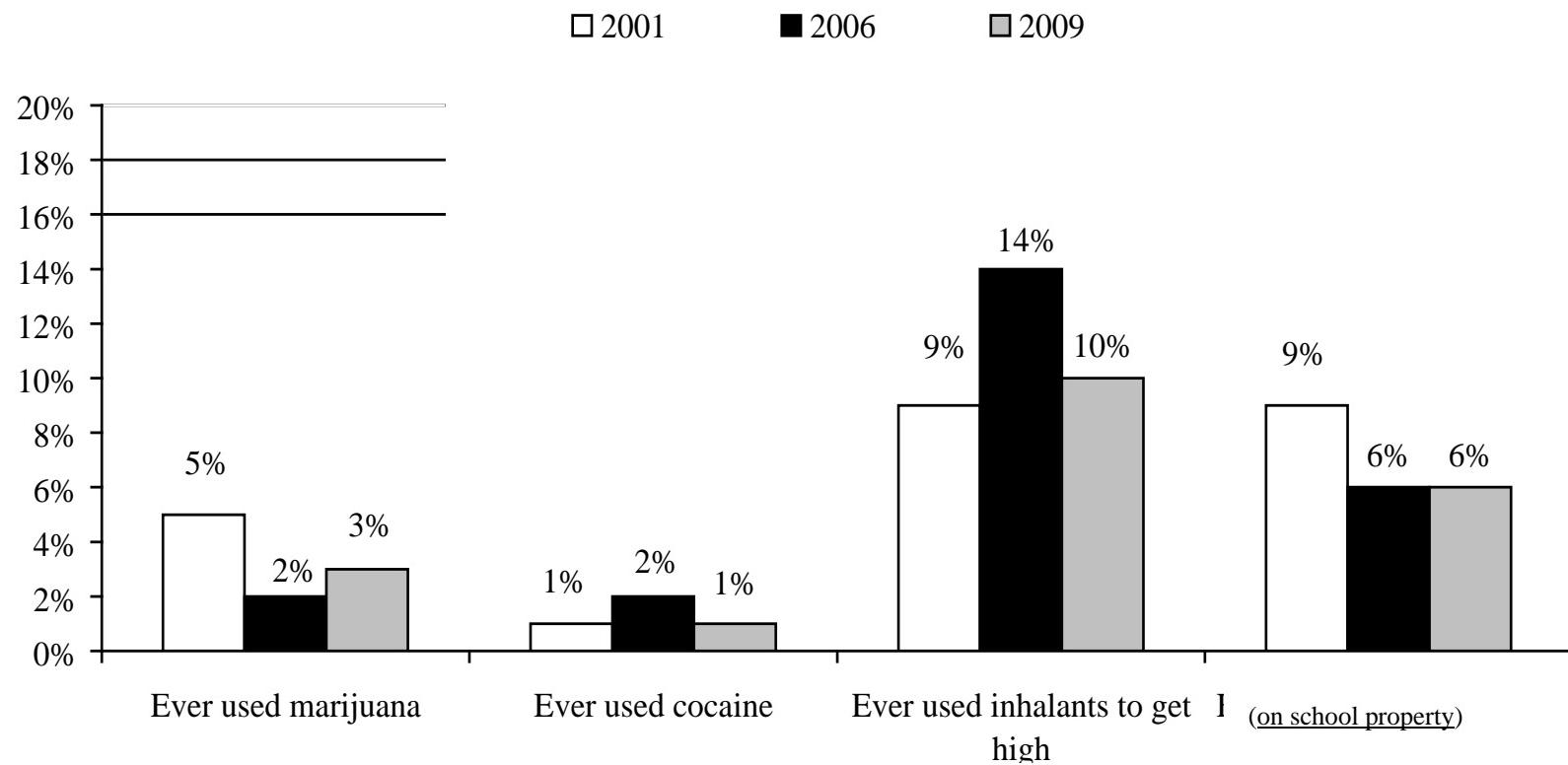
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

ALCOHOL USE



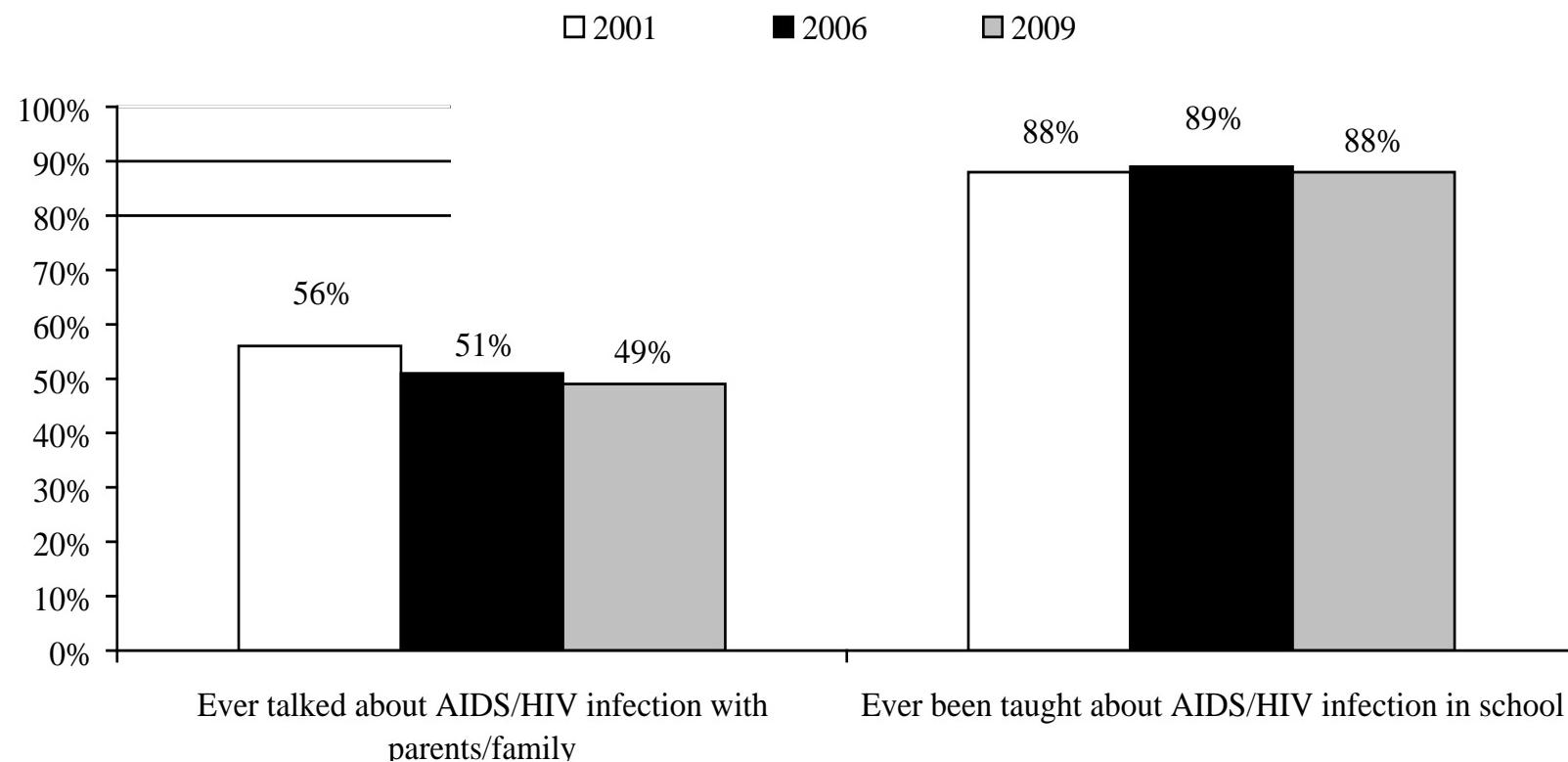
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

ILLEGAL DRUG USE



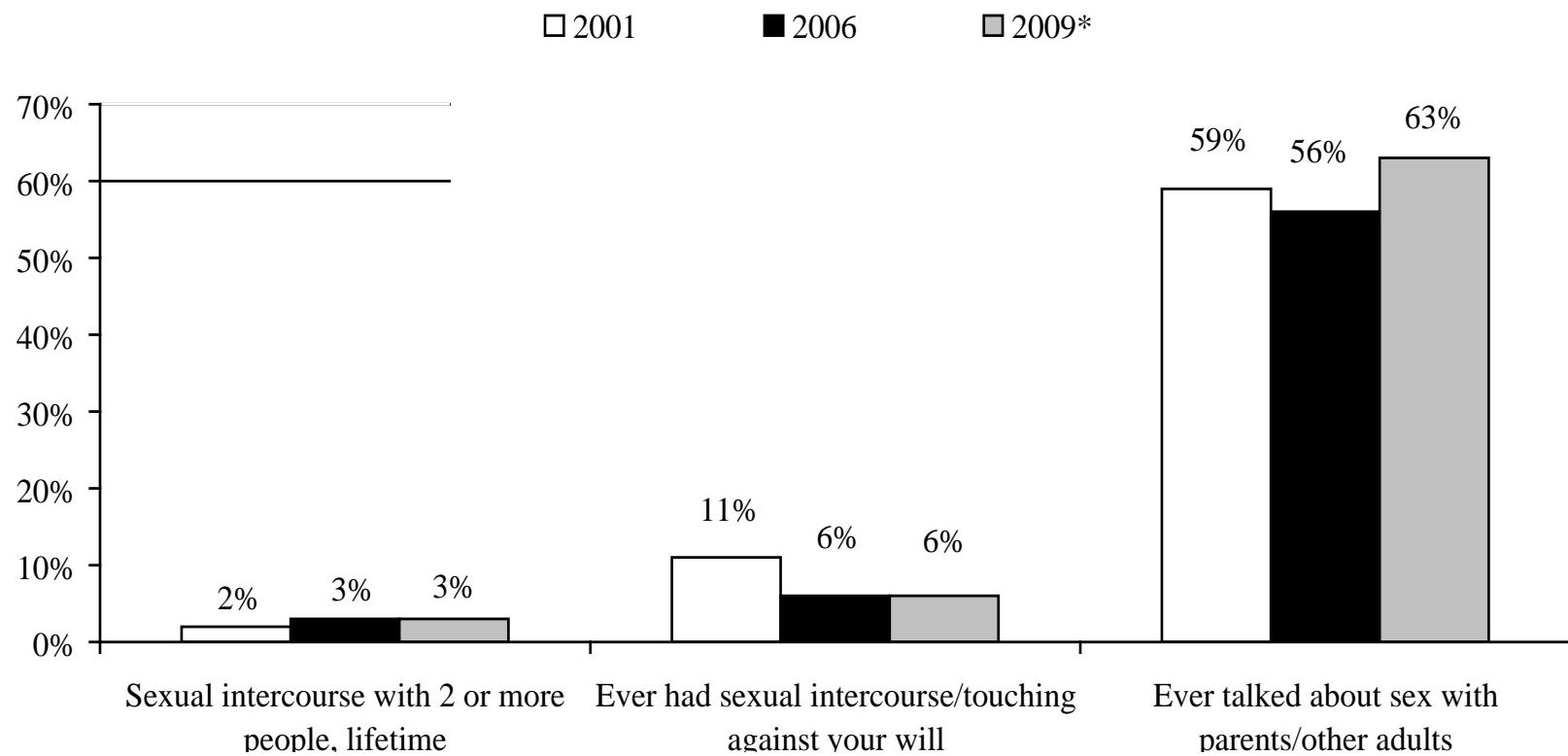
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

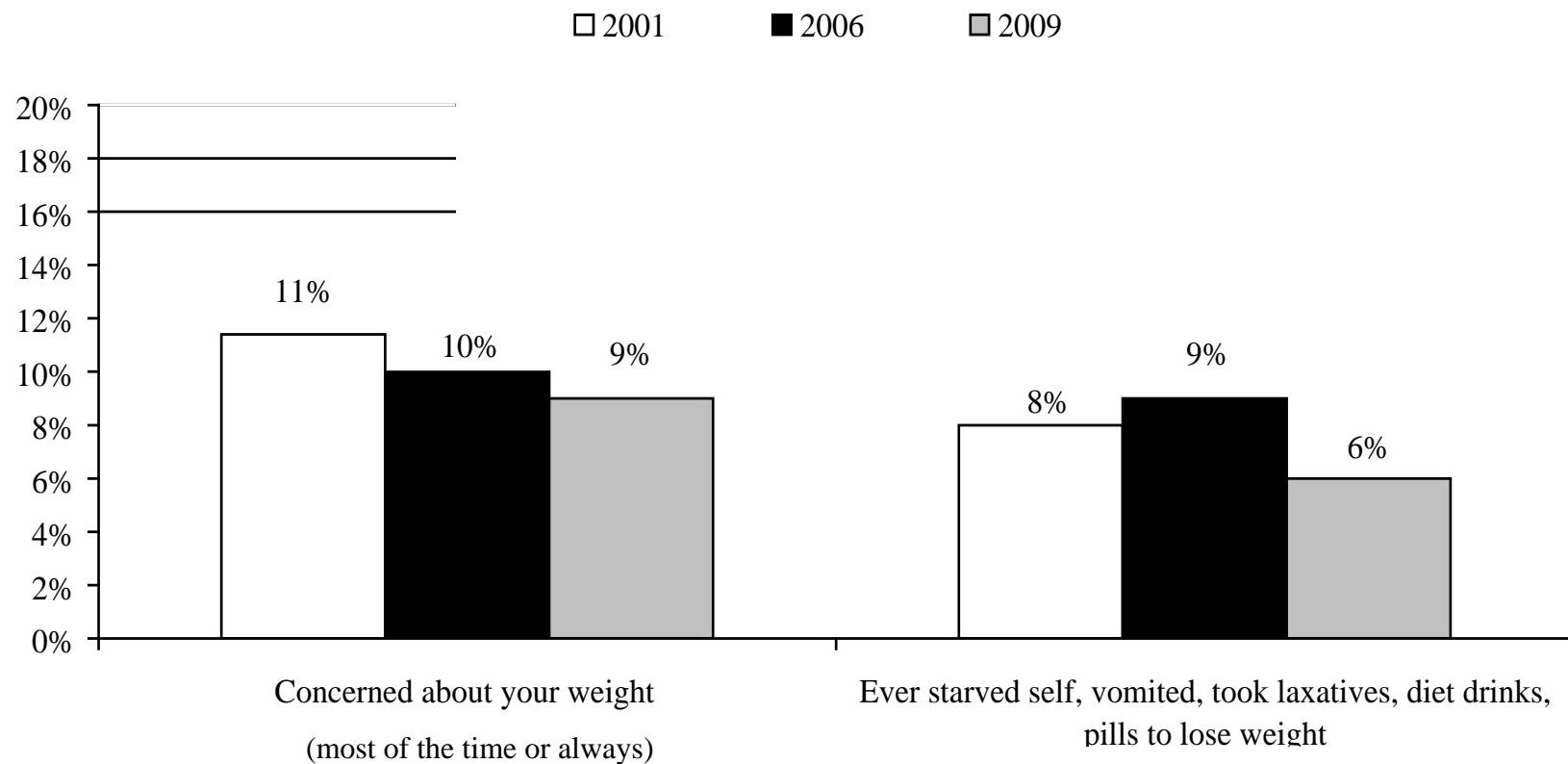
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR



* Grades 7 and 8 only

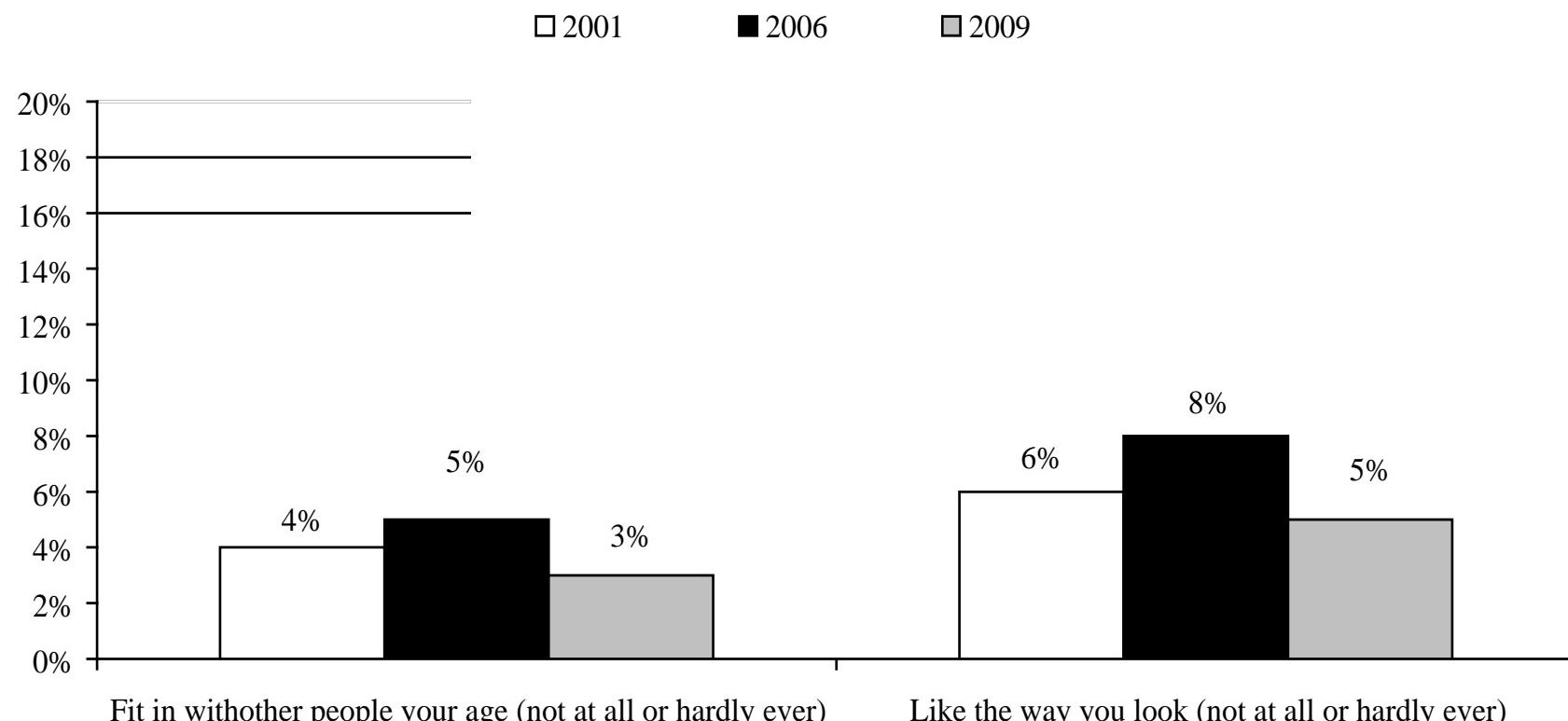
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

DIETARY BEHAVIOR



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

SELF-IMAGE



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2009 YRBS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

